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LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE.

FRANCE.

THE work of M. P. J. DURAND (DE GROS), *Aperçus de taxinomie générale*, is of great importance. It is written in a lucid and lively style; it is full of information and also offers much food for thought. M. Durand (de Gros) does not flatter himself upon having completely exhausted the difficult question which he has attacked, but he has certainly shed a vivid light upon it, and he has formulated the problem more distinctly and more completely than has ever been done before, to my knowledge. If the readers of *The Monist* will permit me to resort for illustration to a rather crude artifice, they will perhaps be better able to grasp the character and natural concatenation of the various problems of classification treated in this work.

I shall ask them to suppose that they have given to them for classification a certain number of marbles, all of different diameters. Nothing is easier than to sort such a collection of marbles; it is sufficient simply to place them in a line, according to their size. If, on the other hand, the number of the marbles is unlimited, and several have the same diameter, the idea suggests itself of arranging them by sets, in such wise that a single marble shall represent and symbolise all the marbles of the same dimensions. If, now, the reader will consider in our marbles not only the diameter but also the color, two cases will be presented, according as those of the same diameter have the same color, or as these two attributes, instead of being exactly correlative, are unequally and accidentally distributed. Even in the first case the difficulty would arise of rec-

onciling classification by colors (superposition) with seriation by diameters (juxtaposition), and it would be necessary to divide our basal line into as many sections as there are colors, and to arrange our units in the order of dimension within each of the sections so obtained.

Next, imagine that the colors exhibit different shadings, that our marbles are composed of different materials, etc.; then, essay to represent to yourself mentally and to translate into graphic form, all the possible cases, and you will find that the following questions will be definitively forced upon your attention.

As was noted above, the necessity will be felt, in the first place, of classifying, not the objects themselves, but symbols, ideal specific units; and in the second place, of distinguishing two orders, one of juxtaposition and another of superposition. In the third place, a choice of distinguishing marks, or characters, is made necessary, which shall permit us to realise this new classification by superposition, or as I might say, by successive encasements; and when we discover finally, that such a character, according as it is more general and embraces a greater number of things, is at the same time exclusive of more particular characters which it has not considered, we shall have established (fourthly) the familiar principle of opposition between *generality* and *complexity*, which increase and decrease, each in the inverse ratio of the other.

When these points have been cleared up, we can assign to our marbles new attributes, either physical or chemical. We may even suppose that they are endowed with life, that they are individualities which have successively appeared in time, or have sprung one from another by filiation, etc., etc. But in the one case then, it will be necessary to classify the individuals themselves, and not their symbols, which places us in a different position from that last signalled; and in another it will become impossible to keep account of each one of all the characters of our analysis, for our marbles having become endowed with life will not cease to present chemical properties, to have dimensions, etc. There is no escape but that of assuming different points of view; and "perfect knowl-

edge" would suppose the agreement of all those points of view from which the things have been considered.

Such are the problems that M. Durand (de Gros) has attacked. He very correctly distinguishes four taxonomic orders: (1) The order of generalities, or of resemblances; (2) The order of composition, or of collectivity; (3) The order of hierarchy; (4) The order of genealogy and of evolution. We know the first two: the one of which, as the author expresses himself, is "essentially metaphysical, and based upon the relation of the genus to the species and of the species to the genus"; the other of which is absolutely "concrete, and based upon the relation of the whole to the part and of the part to the whole." Thus, the term *humanity* has the double signification: (1) of the *attribute* man, and (2) of the *collection* men. The third order is tantamount to saying that a country has its capital, a regiment its colonel, etc. The fourth embraces, in addition to the natural facts of filiation and development, the *historical* order: pure chronology, I should add, if considered in time only; interdependence and repercussions of social facts, if considered in space,—such is history, and I like to view it under the simile of concentric waves, indefinitely intersecting, which our afore-mentioned marbles have successively produced by falling upon the surface of a tranquil pond.

M. Durand (de Gros) enumerates the distinguishing characteristics of these four orders; then he compares them with one another, and shows that they are mutually opposite by pairs, the meaning being that in the orders of hierarchy and genealogy the objects themselves constitute the systematic aggregate of the classification, whilst in the orders of generality and composition we deal with symbols only. He seeks for the species of correlation capable of being established between these different points of view, and he likewise applies himself to what I regard as the important task of extricating the relation which unites the two series of superposition and juxtaposition; a problem which has hitherto been much neglected.

How,—is the question asked of botanists and zoölogists,—are varieties to be arranged within each species, the species within each

genus, the genera within each family, the families within each order, and so on? The character adapted to furnishing the series, be it of sections cut in each plane of superposition, or of units composing each section, can only be a character appertaining to all the objects to be classified, and differentiated in each of these objects. To which remark it is proper to add that the characters selected would not be the same for each plane or part of the plane of juxtaposition, unless we assume the theoretical case in which all the possible characters are strictly correlative, and can be arranged with reference to any one of them. Such would be the case where the diameter of our marbles, for example, involved the color, the material, etc. Such at least is what would seem to me to follow from a thorough criticism.

In the table of ethnical classification drawn up by M. Durand (de Gros) (where individuals are classed by cities, cities by provinces, etc.), might not the cities be classified, and consequently the provinces and states, according to their situation with regard to the same meridian, and the individuals in each city according to their size? Perhaps there might be some advantage in this, but the danger, which we shall immediately see, is that of resorting to characters which are more or less foreign to the precise object of the classification, and we should never have anything but a solution which was approximate in some cases and artificial in others.

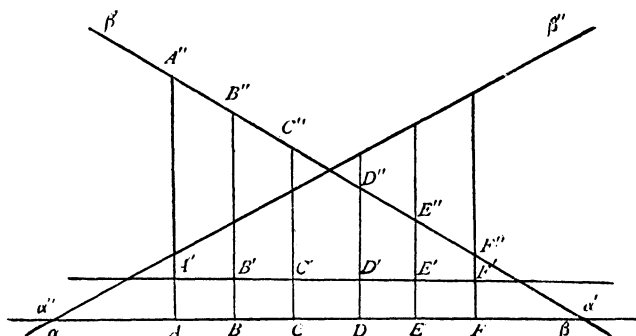
In the course of his acute analysis, illustrated by diagrammatic tables, in which the reasoning takes a concrete form, M. Durand (de Gros) discusses the work of prior classificators, and signalises in their productions many salient errors; such, for example, is the error which he has pilloried for forty years now, with all his great authority as a physiologist,—the error, which, as he states it, consists in reserving for histology the title of general anatomy on the ground that the cell is found in all tissues. This would be equivalent, he says, to identifying general pathology with the special science of diseases, the seat of which is the whole body; or general chemistry with the science of the “simple bodies”! To general anatomy should be assigned the study of the elements, tissues, systems, organs, apparatus, in so far as these terms partake of some-

thing general, that is to say, have something in common with the various correlative species ; while to special anatomy belongs the individual consideration of each of these species, and of each of the different kinds of tissues, etc., and not, as is the opinion to-day, the study of organs and apparatus on the pretext that the cell is the "general" foundation of organisation.

This grave error, which has further falsified, according to M. Durand (de Gros), the conception of general physiology, arises in his opinion from confounding the generic order with the collective order, generic or nominal extension with collective and real extension or comprehension. He stigmatises this confusion on all hands, and endeavors to render precise the meaning of the words *abstract* and *general* with regard to which men like John Stuart Mill and Littré were in contradiction and became involved in lamentable errors. I ought to dwell on other very interesting discussions, as for example that relating to the establishment of the degrees of kinship in the genealogical order, but I have already gone into great detail in considering this work, and shall conclude with a few remarks on the "classification of the sciences," the necessity of which inevitably forces itself upon every philosophical mind.

Spencer, as is well known, attempted to correct the classification of Comte, but the classification which he proposed is based upon ideas which are often erroneous and contradictory. M. Durand (de Gros) criticises him for regarding the sciences as incapable of serial arrangement, so that their logical dependence, as well as their historical dependence, cannot be expressed by any order of succession whatever,—as though, when the series of abstract objects themselves formed a progression of increasing generality, the corresponding sciences ought not in their turn to form a succession. He criticises him further for refusing to subdivide each science into *general* and *special*, and for having failed to recognise that each science is alternately abstract or concrete, according to the point of view taken. But knowing well that so extended a question would require a whole volume, he restricts himself here to certain suggestive indications which I would advise the reader to seek out and ponder upon in the volume itself. Foolhardy as the attempt may

seem of attacking a question like this in a hurried manner, a classification of the sciences might, it seems to me, be figured, roughly and provisorily at least, in the following manner (see adjoining figure):



Let A, B, C, D, E, F be the series of sciences, the definition and arrangement of which I shall not discuss at present. $\alpha\beta$ will represent the order of evolution (the natural evolution of the facts and historical evolution according to Comte); $\alpha'\beta'$ the order of increasing generality; $\alpha''\beta''$ the order of increasing complexity. A', B', C', \dots denotes the concrete plane or stage. A'', B'', C'', \dots are the general sciences, the summit of the hierarchy. It would remain to sketch the interior distribution of each science. I have omitted to consider the applied sciences, or arts, in order not to overload this very simple diagram.

"This book," writes M. Durand (de Gros) in his epilogue, "is merely a succession of *aperçus* over a vast and almost virginal domain. . . . All that I have attempted to do is to raise into relief some of the principal points of this *terra ignota* of science, in order to enable future explorers to direct their footsteps with more certainty." The eminent author has succeeded in this enterprise as much as he could have hoped, and his beautiful work will I trust recall attention to studies which have been greatly neglected by recent schools.

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There is little space left for speaking of the last work of M. D. MERCIER of the Catholic University of Louvain, entitled *Les origines*

de la psychologie contemporaine. I remark with surprise that in a book bearing this title the name of M. Ribot is not mentioned a single time. M. Mercier has selected as the modern representative of English psychology, Spencer, of French psychology, Fouillée, and of German psychology, Wundt; and this selection alone is sufficient proof that his object has been to criticise the philosophical status of the psychological problem, rather than to discuss the positive acquisitions of psychology. This criticism, I should state at once, is well conducted; it has seemed to me instructive and impartial, and I think that its perusal will not be unprofitable, even if one does not accept the Neo-Thomistic doctrine expounded in the first chapter of the work.

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There is still to be mentioned the work of M. L'ABBÉ C. PIAT, *Destinée de l'homme*, a work in which the author distinctly declares himself the champion of philosophical spiritualism and of the belief in a future life. M. l'Abbé Piat has eloquence, erudition, and ingenuity; and yet I doubt if he will succeed in gaining the conviction of critical readers, although he will certainly have diverted their thought into fruitful paths. True, our systems are only insufficient modes of viewing things; and no sooner have we adjusted our telescopes than some cloud intervenes to obscure our vision. But that is the predicament of spiritualism as well as of positivism and idealism; and it would be a great miracle indeed if men should not accept at once, if they were decisive, the proofs of their future existence, which is the thing perhaps to which their desires are most strongly attached.

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From M. ERNEST NAVILLE we have the second edition of his work on free will, *Le libre arbitre*, the merit of which I am glad to recognise, and which can properly be consulted on this insoluble question (insoluble because it involves, in my opinion, incommensurable terms),—one of those questions which, as Macaulay said in his essay on Bacon, “have caused philosophers labors comparable to those of the souls of the damned in the Grecian Tartarus.”

I have been guilty of a grave omission in not mentioning and analysing, as I should have done, the important work of M. PAUL JANET, *Principes de métaphysique et de psychologie*.¹ I have great admiration for the distinguished qualities of M. Janet, his knowledge and his character, and I have no prejudice against the spiritualistic doctrine of which he is the champion; but he will pardon me for not accepting either the definition which he gives of philosophy, or his conception of psychology, which already prejudge that doctrine. The analytic method pursued by him in defining philosophy leads him to present in his definition the equivalent of his own philosophy; while at the same time psychology is made the instrument of that philosophy. There are other divergencies to be noted, but I prefer to refrain from discussing them at present, and would refer the reader either to the work itself or to the exhaustive study of it which M. Bergson has given in the *Revue philosophique* for December, 1897.

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From M. P. LACOMBE we have an excellent work, *Introduction à l'histoire littéraire*,² written by a cultured man of letters and a good psychologist. M. Lacombe agrees with the majority of authors in holding that art is a species of play; he remarks in addition, and quite correctly, that artistic imitation, when it enables us to evoke at will and to repeat indefinitely the emotion which we sought in play, is also maintained by the excitation of our self-love, and he shows the important rôle of self-love and of vanity in the sentiment which impels the artist to create and to realise the dreams of his imagination.

As to the conditions of a scientific literary history, M. Lacombe differs almost entirely from Taine; he rejects the doctrine of the "literary race," an idea which of all is false, and which led Taine to misunderstand the human substratum, the permanent psychological foundation, which is only partly modifiable by environment and circumstances. With some reservation as to so sweeping a

¹ Paris: Delagrave. 1897. The other works are published by F. Alcan.

² Hachette, publisher. 1898.

condemnation of the ethnical factor, I should express this by saying that the race is at the bottom of the individual, and the man at the bottom of the race.

An exposition of the conditions of literary history; the psychology of the artist and his public; the study of literature viewed from the point of view of its evolution, its environment, its forms, and its social rôle; the psychology of style: such are the subjects treated in this work, and treated with tact and common sense. M. Bergson has restricted himself to considering French literature, so as to give more precision to his demonstrations. We cannot take it amiss if he has done so, especially as he arrives at results (and this is the essential point) which are applicable to all literature.

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From M. EDMOND THIAUDIÈRE, finally, we have a little volume of thoughts bearing the title, *L'Obsession du divin*.¹ I have previously spoken here of the last volume of this author, *La soif de juste*, which has since received the acknowledgment of the French Academy. M. Thiaudière is not a professional philosopher, but he is an acute moralist, high-minded and large-hearted, with whom intellectual companionship is extremely pleasurable.

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I had almost forgotten *L'Éducation des sentiments*² by M. FÉLIX THOMAS, a work to which I recommend the attention of educationists and also of psychologists. M. Thomas has set himself the task of deducing from pure psychology practical hints for the education of children, and he is to be felicitated upon his undertaking, even though one may have doubts as to the actual efficacy of books of this character. The advancement of the species is effected on a thousand recondite paths, and we ought not to bar progress on any one of them.

LUCIEN ARRÉAT.

PARIS.

¹ Fischbacher, publisher. 1898.

² F. Alcan, publisher.